SHRI N. E. BALARAM: In part (b), the hon. Minister has said that such accidents are not common in this sector. But Sir, I would like to point out that during the last three-four months, there have been a series of accidents in this particular route. I would like to know whether this has been brought to the notice of the Government and what steps the Government is going to take to remedy the situation.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Once again, I would like to point out that the question is about parting of trains and detachment of compartments and not about accidents in general.

श्री शरद यादव : श्रीमन्, मैं मंत्री महोदय से पूछना चाहता हूं कि भारतीय रेल अधिनियम के अनुसार जो रेल ट्रैक्स हैं उनका नवीनीकरण कितना परसेन्टेज होना चाहिए और समूचे देश में नये ट्रैक्स बनाने का काम कितने परसेन्टेज तक हुआ है और आपके इस सवाल के अन्तर्गत जो एक्सीडैन्ट्स हो रहे हैं...

MR CHAIRMAN: The question does not arise. This question is about detachment of compartments. You are asking about track renewal. *Question No. 204.*

Helicopters acquired by Helicopter Corporation of India

*204. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:†

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the helicopters acquired by the Helicopter Corporation of India have recently met some accidents, and if so, the details thereof and the action being taken to prevent such accidents;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Helicopter Corporation of India has taken the helicopters on lease from a foreign company and the same are being leased out, in turn, to the Gas Authority of India Ltd; and

(c) if so, what are the advantages of the Helicopter Corporation of India working as a conduit for the foreign helicopter leasing companies in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

.. .. **Statement**

(a) No, Sir.

(b) The Helicopter Corporation of India has aken a decision to we lease one AS-355 F1 helicopter from M/s. Aerospatiale through their subsidiary M/s. Samaroe Co. Pvt. Ltd. Singapore, for a period of two years for meeting the requirement of the Gas Authority of India Ltd.

(c) In the arrangements by which helicopters are leased by the Helicopter Corporation of India Ltd for the Gas Authority of India Ltd. both organisations benefit. For the HCIL the advantages are:—

(i) No capital investment being required.

(ii) HCIL not having to deploy its ground staff and flying crew. However, it does have the option to replace Samaroe's expatriate staff in a phased manner.

(iii) HCIL gaining experience in such operations.

(iv) HCIL not being required to incur any expenditure on maintenance.

(v) If the present arrangements are not successful or the requirements cease to exist after the period of contract, HCIL having the option to return the helicopters to the manufacturers.

For the Gas Authority of India Ltd. the advantages are:—

(i) The availability of the professional expertise of HCIL to select,

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bir Bhadra Pratap Singh.

evaluate and ensure smooth operations of helicopters leased from abroad.

(ii) HCIL being in a better position to negotiate favourable terms for the Gas Authority of India Ltd. since it is an important organisation in the field of helicopter operations.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, by no rule of interpretation, part (a) can be subservient to part (b). I think, the hon. Minister would have seen the report published in the 'Hindustan Times' today, on the front page. May I inform him that F-9 helicopters he has obtained from Westland met with accident eighteen times. So far as part (b) is concerned, it is much more serious Sir, there was an undertaking given by the hon. Minister in this House, in reply to Unstarred Question No. 438, dated 23rd July, 1986. I quote: Part (a) of the question was "whether it is a fact that in addition to purchasing helicopters, the HCI is also making efforts to lease helicopters from some foreign firms?". The answer given was "No, Sir". Part (b) of the question was "if so, on what terms and conditions including responsibility for payment of customs duty and for providing the crew and maintenance;". The answer was "Does not arise". Then, part (c) of the question was "whether it is a fact that HCI has asked some public sector organisations to scrap bids already received by them for leasing helicopters in order to accommodate the HCI". The answer was "No, Sir". Now, the answer is quite contradictory. May I know from the hon. Minister what action he is going to take against the officials of the Helicopter Corporation of India who have put their Minister in lurch? In spite of this undertaking they are now giving a reverse answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, are you in charge of the Westland helicopters?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Of course, the valuation and other things were done by the Defence Ministry. We came in much later, but the hon. Member has brought in some charges which I would like to answer. First of all, it is absolutely wrong to say that the Westland aircraft have met with accidents. With God's grace we have not had a single accident and we hope that it will not be so.

Initially, of course, whenever there is an operation which is started, we have a teething problem like the leakage of oil, high oil consumption, etc. Every time a small snag is seen or reported, the Director of Airworthiness is told at once. I would like to inform that we had a total snag reporting, not accident, of a very minor nature, 14 of these. It is obligatory for any manufacturer to see to it. It reports to the own country or any people who have taken the aircraft on lease.

As far as second part of the question is concerned that I am supposed to have answered certain questions that the Helicopter Corporation will not go in for leasing of aircraft, that is right. Although my answer was clear, I would like the other Members also know that the Gas Authority of India wanted helicopters and they had floated a tender on their own. After floating the tenders, they also wrote to the Helicopter Corporation to find out whether we would like to give them the helicopters. Their requirement was for five to six seaters whereas the Helicopter Corporation has 10 to 15 seaters and they were very expensive. So, they had gone for tenders. Then they asked us, why don't you have experts and get into this? We came in. We have charged them the fees for doing them the work. Rather we have saved them a lot of money. Helicopter Corporation have also gained a lot of experience because ultimately it is the Helicopter Corporation which has to take over the services. So, about the first part, Indian Government does not manufacture five to six seater helicopters. Otherwise, we would have

been happy to take Indian helicopters. As such, as the Member feels there is nothing that went wrong.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Mr. Chairman, there is another much more serious violation. It is true that HCI has acted as the middleman in helping a foreign company—a very serious matter contrary to an undertaking given by a very senior Minister— to deliver a foreign helicopter on lease to the Gas Authority of India in open violation of the policy declared by the then Minister of Transport last year and written assurances given by the then Minister of Petroleum, Shri N. D. Tiwari, that no such violations may be permitted. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't record this interruption.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: I would like to read out the letter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it is not necessary. You just mention the point because it is not a debate.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: It is pertinent, it is confirmed that HCI do not intend to release helicopters to the companies which have not participated in the original deed. Now my simple question will be, if HAL development of helicopter work is not going on very well, if we are not able to manufacture our own ALH helicopters so that it has become necessary for us to buy or get it on lease, will the Government consider adopting an open policy in the leasing or acquisition of helicopters by the HCI where in open tenders are invited and open evaluations of different offers are made?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I would like to inform the hon. Member that on specific instructions from the Gas Authority of India, the Helicopter Corporation came in. And I would also like to inform him once and for all that the lowest tender which the Gas Authority got from the only two companies in the world which manufacture twin engine four to five seater helicopters, the Helicopter Corporation got lesser than that and it saved some amount. I could also give the amount if the Member wants it. So there is no such thing. I would also like to inform him that the Helicopter Corporation is a Government company and to any department in any Ministry which requires its services either directly or on wet lease, dry lease or for leasing of the aircraft, we will be the first one to come and give our services. We do not want the foreigners to come in our country and take away foreign exchange. But if we do not have the aircraft, we have no option but to do what arrangements we have done.

श्री भगतराम मनहर : मान्यवर, मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि मै० सामारोए कंपनी प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, सिंगापुर से जो हेलीकोप्टर पट्टे पर लिये जा रहे हैं उसकी क्या दरें हैं, किस दर पर पट्टे में लिया जा रहा है और किस दर पर गैस अथारिटी को दिया जा रहा है? दूसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि इसकी टर्म्स एंड कंडीशंस क्या है? गैस अथारिटी के अलावा कितनी और कंपनियों ने हेलीकोप्टर के लिये अप्रोच किया है? बी पार्ट मेरा है कि क्या पट्टे पर लेने के बारे में उस कंपनी के साथ अन्डू फेवर किया गया है? क्या सरकार को इस तरह की कोई शिकायत मिली है, यदि हां तो उसके ऊपर क्या कार्यवाही हो रही है?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, I have just informed the House but I would like to repeat again that there are two companies in the world which are manufacturing this—one is a German company and the other is a French one. And the Gas Authority of India had floated tenders. After negotiations and evaluating the aircraft we have got it at less than the lowest tender at which the Gas Authority had got it. Rather we have saved the money for them and we have charged them also for our services.

You have also asked about the features of the lease and the amount of money which probably has gone. We have taken from the Samaroe on a wet lease because the Germans said that they would not give on wet lease but would give on dry lease. They also put a compulsion that after the expiry of two years, it was compulsory for the Helicopter Corporation to buy the aircraft. Whereas the French company have said: "No, you can have the aircraft on a two-year lease. The option is there, you can buy it or not buy it if you don't want to buy it".

I would also like to inform you that there are about nine or ten salient features of the leasing arrangement. If the Member wants, I can read it, otherwise....

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, but you please tell the House what is wet lease and what is dry lease.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Wet lease is when the aircraft come with the pilots and the dry lease is when the aircraft do not come with the pilots.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you have answered the question.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: The charges to be paid to Samaroe for each helicopters are mobilisation charges of 20,000 dollars, demobilisation charges of 10,000 dollars, the fixed monthly charges for the helicopter of 16,500 dollars plus all the money which they are going to spend in the country—1 lakh 44 thousand and one hundred forty five—which are going to be paid in rupees, and hourly flying charges of 170 dollars plus 1564 rupees.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Sir, the Miniser has stated that as a result of the intervention of HCIL, the Gas Authority of India was able to have an advantage. I would like to ask the Minister whether Samaroe Company was one of those companies which bid tenders in response to the tenders floated by the Gas Authority of India Ltd. If it was, how is it that HCIL was able to get lesser price than what they had quoted earlier? If they were not, how does the Samaroe Company come into the picture?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, as far as the information given to me by the Gas Authority is concerned, the Samaroe Company does not come in; they have not bid for it. It was some Indonesians, Canadians and some others. But the manufacturers—I want to repeat again—are two; there are only two companies in the world, and the Samaroe Company is a subsidiary of Aerospatiale. It is not a private company; it is a company which is part of the main company which is in France. We are dealing with them because their commercial terms are very good....

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: One minute, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gupta.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: Sir, since it appears that in these helicopters a lot of lease money is involved, would the honourable Minister inform us what are the plans for developing such helicopters in India and how soon they would be ready to take over this responsibility?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, I don't think we will go in for manufacture. It is too big a project and it is for the Air Force people to decide whether they will manufacture it. The Helicopter Corporation is there only to run it commercially for the Government and for the people.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: Sir, in view of the reply to part (c) of the question, that the Singapore subsidiary, M|s. Samaroe Company employs expatriate staff, would it be correct to infer that we have no role in selecting or screening the staff and, in

view of the delicate security position and because the helicopters would be flying over a sensitive part of our installations, what kind of precautions does the Ministry propose to take to ward off any espionage and other related activities?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, it does not come under my Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Satya Pal Malik.

श्री सत्यपाल मलिक : मेरे सवाल का जवाब मंत्री जी ने दे दिया है। (व्यवधान)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Sir, it is gratifying to note that the Helicopter Corporation of India has been established to undertake manifold services in the country. I would like to know from the honourable Minister what is the number of helicopters already acquired and which are the important places, particularly the hill stations, which are sought to be immediately connected, and whether the Chandigarh-Simla route forms part of it.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, the total number of helicopters received is 21—nine Westland and 12 Dauphin. We have deployed these aircraft: On ONGC—5 Westland and 8 Dauphin. To Sikkim Government we have given one on wet lease, one for Jammu and Kashmir, one for Andamans, one for Lakshadweep; two are under training and two are with Customs. We are very soon hoping to start a service in Bombay. As soon as I get the land, there I can make a helipad. Any other requirement by the State Government, subject to my aircraft's capacity and availability, I will be too happy to give the aircraft.

SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Sir, sometime ago I had gone through some news item that the foreign companies influence the authorities to decide on the type of helicopter that they have with them. Particularly because now-a-days a number of cases of middlemen in the deals are coming to light, I would like to ascertain from the Minister whether the decision on the type of helicopter required is foolproof and calling of tenders from other countries is also foolproof and that no middlemen are there in the deals.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, there are norms set by the Government of India and we go according them.

Hike in DTC rates for schools

*205. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY†
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governments attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the Hindustan Times of 10th April, 1987 wherein it has been stated that DTC has hiked the rate for buses given on contract to schools in Delhi; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The DTC has revised the rates for school charter services from Rs. 2.50 per km. to Rs. 4.50 per km. with effect from 16-4-1987 This revision is to meet the increased direct cost of operations since the last revision in 1981.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, while I appreciate that the last revision was done only in 1981, there is a considerable hike in the transport charges that they have levied on the chartered services. I

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury.